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Contras in Pact Giving Civilians Greater Power

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MIAMI, May 28 — After almost three weeks of hard bargaining here, the leaders of the main Nicaraguan rebel organization were reported today to have reached an accord under which civilian officials will be given greater control.

Rebel sources in Miami and Washington say the agreement appears likely to resolve a long power struggle that threatened to split the rebel front, which is named the United Nicaraguan Opposition.

The rebels, known as contras, are seeking the overthrow of the Nicaraguan Government, which took power in the 1979 revolution that toppled the dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle.

Democrats Strengthened

The rebel sources cautioned that the effect of the accord would depend on the willingness of rebel officials to put aside their differences and carry out its terms.

"This was a tough fight that strengthens the democrats in the United Nicaraguan Opposition," said Robert Leiken, a Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace who monitors the rebels. "But we have to see now if the agreement is applied."

The accord appears designed to strengthen the hand of Arturo Cruz and Alfonso Robelo within the rebel movement while diminishing the power of Adolfo Calero, the head of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the main rebel army. The three are co-leaders of the United States-backed United Nicaraguan Opposition.

The changes may strengthen the Reagan Administration's case in Congress for renewed financing for the guerrillas. Congress cut off military aid to the rebels in 1984 after the Central Intelligence Agency was found to have been involved in the mining of Nicaraguan harbors.

The rebels received more than \$100 million in American aid, the last package of which was a \$27 million in so-called nonlethal assistance.

The Administration has worked for the last year to counter charges that the rebels are controlled chiefly by extreme ideological conservatives and military commanders who were loyal to President Somoza.

Several rebel sources said the Administration pressed the rebels to come to an agreement, urging Mr. Calero in particular to make concessions.

The accord appears to be a kind of contract intended to give civilian officials greater control over key political appointments and the disciplining or dismissal of military commanders.

In addition, new civilian officials will oversee rebel finances, political strategy and military operations and will have the power to investigate and punish human rights abuses and the misuse of funds, rebel sources said. None of the three leaders would comment on the accord today.

Leaders at Odds

But according to rebel sources, Mr. Calero feels he was pressed too much to compromise to keep Mr. Cruz from carrying out a threat to resign if major changes were not made.

Mr. Cruz and Mr. Robelo have been at odds with Mr. Calero for the last year, charging that he has sought to monopolize power.

The three also have political differences. Mr. Cruz and Mr. Robelo are former Sandinista officials who represent the Social Democratic wing of the rebel opposition. They are willing to consider a negotiated settlement with the Sandinistas and believe the Nicaraguan revolution has brought some benefits to the Nicaraguan people.

Mr. Calero is seen as a strongly ideological conservative who has found allies among exiled Nicaraguan businessmen and military officials who supported the Somoza regime and who believe the Sandinistas must be overthrown militarily.

Under the accord, some key decisions, such as the dismissal of military officials and important political appointments, will now be by a majority vote among the three leaders rather than by unanimous agreement as in the past, rebel sources said.

Other decisions, such as the making of new political alliances, the appointment of military commanders and setting of the budget, will still be by consensus, the sources said. On issues where consensus is not possible an out-

side committee will have the final say, they said.

In the past, all major decisions were by consensus, a procedure that in practice led to Mr. Calero vetoing changes sought by Mr. Robelo and Mr. Cruz. The new procedure appears to strengthen Mr. Cruz and Mr. Robelo while preserving considerable power for Mr. Calero.

The accord appears to leave most of the military command structure of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force intact. There have been repeated charges that the rebels have failed to expand rapidly and find wide popular support in part because several key commanders are former National Guardsmen who served the Somoza Government.

Southern Front Planned

Rebel sources said it was not possible to shift key military commanders in the middle of a war. Instead, they said, they hoped to improve the guerrillas' military and political standing by establishing strong civilian oversight of their operations.

In addition, more funds and supplies will be devoted to creating a southern military front in Nicaragua near the Costa Rican border, the sources said.